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"GENERAL PURPOSE GROUND FORCES: WHAT PURPOSE?"

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NEW WORLD ORDER-- a phrase uttered frequently by former President George Bush during and after the Persian Gulf War-- no longer connotes the optimism of America's global view at the end of DESERT STORM. The phrase continues to appear in national security and foreign policy speeches and essays, but is now bracketed by quotation marks to express either despair or cynicism. The warm glow of a much heralded Cold War victory, plus the Gulf War triumph, the growth of democracy in developing countries, and the apparent unipolar U.S. domination of the world scene are now matched by the colder realities of ethnic warfare, African famine, economic recession, and new doubts about the United Nations' effectiveness as international arbiter and peacekeeper.

While the American people digest CNN's daily diet of widespread global misery and discord and grapple with our nation's response options, a new administration seeks to remain engaged internationally while coming to terms with huge budget deficits and domestic economic priorities. In the midst of this tar pit sits the Department of Defense with shrinking resources, expanding missions, and a very unsettled political climate. The public's and, to some extent, the Congress's view of this boils down to a discussion of dollars and manpower. Most visibly and immediately affected by the wide-ranging proposals for defense drawdown and restructuring are general purpose forces--air wings, Marine regiments, Army divisions, and the Navy's surface combatant ships. This essay examines a subset of this combat capability: general purpose ground forces (Army and Marine). I will attempt to place the current debate in its appropriate geopolitical, domestic, and military

strategy contexts and then offer ideas focused on mid-term (10 years) ground force missions and structure.

NATIONAL POWER IN THE MIDST OF UNCERTAINTY

The most cynical view of current global developments essentially states that the world is chaotic; none of that chaos immediately threatens vital U.S. interests (with the exception of Middle East oil); and America's need to become more competitive in the hardball game of international trade renders the military element of national power nearly useless. A very different perspective offers a host of situations that pose mid-term national security threats and long-term prosperity risks that require widespread American engagement to include visible military presence in regional coalitions and in United Nations operations. A third global outlook occupies the middle ground, recognizing growing instability on several continents, but less certain whether global changes reflect threats or opportunities. This third viewpoint usually accepts a reduced but substantial military capability as necessary insurance against the downside of uncertainty.

My own view most closely parallels the third position. Uncertainty and its attendant risks can be captured in several questions about today's evolving global structure (or disintegration).

- (1) Will the economic disarray and ethnic conflict in and

between former Soviet republics degenerate into nationalistic wars within the Commonwealth of Independent States during the next 10-20 years?

(2) Do the desperate famines of Somalia and Sudan represent a growing pattern of civil war and collapse of authority throughout Africa?

(3) Have U.N. ineffectiveness and European and American hesitancy in the Balkans set the stage for a major multi-national war in southeast Europe?

(4) Does the stalemate or breakdown of U.S./U.N.-brokered peace agreements in Angola and Cambodia make future agreements under U.N. auspices less likely?

(5) Do the civil wars in Liberia and Afghanistan and increasing unrest in Zaire represent a growing trend of destabilization in developing countries?

(6) Are the four major powers of Northeast Asia (Russia, China, Japan, United States) capable of working together to minimize the external risks posed by an imploding North Korean government equipped with nuclear weapons?

(7) Can the regional and perhaps global ambitions of China, India, and Iran be guided in positive directions?

These seven questions are a small sample of national security issues confronting the Clinton administration. Given the magnitude of both risks and opportunities, it is evident that the exercise of our national power will require sustained skill and synchronization that we have not consistently displayed in the nation's 200 plus years. Success seems inconceivable if we de-

liberately or inadvertently decouple military strength from the economic, political, and diplomatic instruments of national power. What seems to be missing from the logic of those advocating massive cuts of conventional forces beyond those already programmed through 1995 is the recognition that the four primary elements or instruments of national power are interdependent. The value of the whole does indeed exceed the sum of its parts. The proponents of a very small active duty military have forgotten what has been eloquently stated by General Colin Powell:

"We cannot lead without our armed forces. Economic power is essential; political and diplomatic skills are needed; the power of our beliefs and our values is fundamental to any success we might achieve; but the presence of our arms to buttress these other elements of our power is as crucial to us as the freedom we so adore."¹

It is particularly ironic that in the midst of the sharp debate over what direction the United States should pursue in this fluid international environment, other nations seem to better appreciate the present and future utility of American military strength than we do.

THE FOG OF DOMESTIC POLITICS

The three-sided debate over U.S. foreign policy and the associated application of national power outlined above is enormously complex and deserves a thorough public airing. But, as bluntly put during the 1992 presidential campaign, our political focus is: "It's the economy, stupid!" Our national security and foreign

policy concerns have been relegated to a mere side show. There are five aspects of this domestic political debate that can lead to disastrous consequences for national security strategy and accompanying force structure.

The first unfortunate effect is that deficit reduction has taken on a life of its own. In the heated battle over Clinton administration proposals for new taxes and reduced federal expenditures, the defense budget has become a cash cow to be milked. Since taxes, entitlement programs, and expenditures for health care and education are highly volatile issues, it is much more politically palatable to take a quick look around, declare America's vital interests secure, and whack a few more billion out of the proposed FY'94 defense budget. Manpower cuts in the form of conventional forces is the most expedient way to reduce costs fast. General purpose forces may indeed be the logical source of savings, but no thoughtful analysis of national security objectives and strategy has preceded the latest swing of the budget axe.

A second political hot potato that obscures rational policy analysis is the widespread demand that our trading partners "level the playing field" in order for Americans to regain a favorable balance of payments. Our consideration of longer term strategic issues with Japan, China, the European Community, and southeast Asia has been blinded by a highly emotional but not very enlightened demand to "get tough on trade".

A third popular topic that further reduces the strategy debate to trivial sloganeering is "defense burden-sharing", primarily with

Europe, Japan and Korea. Recent rhetoric would have the average American believe our allies pay virtually nothing for stationing of U.S. forces on their soil and thus get a free ride that allows them to concentrate on economic growth, to our detriment.

Underlying these three highly charged issues is a fourth, more fundamental problem--an inability or refusal to connect the domestic "topic of the week" to a larger framework of national interests. Congress, the press, and the American public treat our operations in Somalia, Bosnian airdrops, trade negotiations with Japan, domestic military base closures, and North Korean foot-dragging on nuclear inspections as individual events that have absolutely no interconnectivity. The relevance of these events to our national interests gets only passing mention.

Finally, and most dangerous of all is the recent trend toward pushing the nation's senior uniformed military leaders from their legitimate seat at the policy-making table. There is a growing perception that the nation's Joint Chiefs of Staff and unified combatant command Commanders in Chief (CINCs), are becoming strictly policy implementers. The teamwork, honest discourse, and sense of mutual respect between military and civilian members of the national security establishment have clearly diminished since the arrival of the new administration. This disturbing attitude is not limited to the Clinton administration, but has appeared increasingly in newspaper editorials and op-ed pieces. Too often in recent months, senior uniformed military leaders have been characterized as disloyal because they have added their carefully considered opinions to the public discourse on crucial

subjects. If we are to construct any useful framework that coherently links the enormous strategic implications of international events to domestic political decisions, we must elevate the debate above the fog-enshrouded low ground of 30 second sound bites and single interest expediency. That can't happen if we leave empty chairs at the discussion table.

OUR DECLARED STRATEGY

In the midst of all the contradictory evidence and opinions about the emerging international structure, and despite the political fog enshrouding any sensible debate of how our domestic priorities should interact with our national interests, there is some solid footing for discussion: the published National Security Strategy (January, 1993) and the companion Regional Defense Strategy (January, 1993). Some may argue that these two documents were George Bush and Dick Cheney's swan songs and have already passed into oblivion. I disagree with that assessment and believe these two strategic policy statements possess continued value for three reasons:

(1) No one in Congress or the new administration has contradicted the strategy or offered a published alternative.

(2) Both documents offer a sound global viewpoint and accompanying strategic direction that serve as a good basis for discussion.

(3) The critical strategic planning document for our joint

combatant commanders- the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP)- is based on the Regional Defense Strategy. The United States Department of Defense is, in fact, implementing that very strategy and will continue to do so unless President Clinton or Secretary of Defense Les Aspin direct otherwise.

The National Security Strategy expresses four national security objectives:

" •global and regional stability which encourages peaceful change and progress.

•open, democratic and representative political systems worldwide.

•an open international trading and economic system which benefits all participants.

•an enduring global faith in America--that it can and will lead in a collective response to the world's crises."²

The Regional Defense Strategy translates the enduring national interests and the above national security objectives into four strategic goals:

" •...to deter or defeat attack from whatever source, against the United States, its citizens and forces, and to honor our historic and treaty commitments.

•...to strengthen and extend the system of defense arrangements that binds democratic and like-minded nations together in common defense against aggression, builds habits of cooperation, avoids the renationalization of security policies, and provides security at lower costs and with lower risks for all.

•...to preclude any hostile power from dominating a region critical to our interests, and also thereby to strengthen the barriers against the reemergence of a global threat to the interests of the United States and our allies.

•...to help preclude conflict by reducing sources of regional instability and to limit violence should conflict occur."³

Both strategy documents then specify four "fundamental elements"⁴ of the defense program to achieve these goals and objectives:

- strategic deterrence and defense (detering nuclear attack)
- forward presence
- crisis response (power projection to meet "both traditional and non-traditional requirements")
- reconstitution ("retain the capability to recreate a global warfighting capability")

The National Security Strategy and Regional Defense Strategy go on to elaborate on specific regional concerns and opportunities where American military forces have a role. To date, no member of the Clinton administration has publicly challenged any of the interests, objectives, goals or elements of the Bush-Cheney-Powell strategy. If we accept these two documents as valid expressions of American defense strategy, we are now ready to examine how general purpose forces help achieve the stated end.

Marine and army units play a crucial role in fulfilling three of the four elements of defense strategy: forward presence, crisis response, and reconstitution. Continued stationing of the U.S. Army's 2d Infantry Division near the demilitarized zone in the Republic of Korea, employment of the I Marine Expeditionary

Force (IMEF) and U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division in Operation RESTORE HOPE in Somalia, and maintenance of eight National Guard divisions in the United States represent, respectively, clear examples of these three elements.

Joint doctrine further specifies how ground forces contribute to the nation's strategic capabilities. Joint Pub 1, Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces, specifies eight military capabilities that support joint campaigns. Ground forces are central to two of those capabilities: forcible entry and sustained action on land. Forcible entry is a specific capability provided by the marines (amphibious) and army (airborne and air assault).⁵ Sustained land presence is the primary reason for the U.S. Army's existence and is a capability of the Marine Corps if sufficiently reinforced with additional logistics and general support artillery.

Given the joint doctrine for force employment and our declared national strategy, JSCP guidance to the CINCs outlines a planning strategy for conventional flexible deterrence options (FDO) and forward presence operations. The FDO guidance's five precepts clearly recognize the full range of crises and appropriate responses that encompass all elements of national power:

- "(1) Implement to deter or forestall the onset of a crisis.
- (2) Encompass economic, diplomatic, political, and military elements of national power.
- (3) Avoid placing forces in a position where they may be sacrificed if a potential adversary is not deterred.
- (4) Facilitate the deployment of decisive force should it appear that the signaling of resolve has not been effective.

(5) Be capable of rapid deescalation should the crisis appear defused."⁶

JSCP guidance for forward presence operations is similarly broad. It defines forward presence as the "totality of U.S. instruments of power deployed overseas (both permanently and temporarily) at any time".⁷ A wide-ranging assortment of 34 specific actions are aligned into six categories:

- operational training and deployments
- security assistance
- peacekeeping operations
- protecting U.S. citizens abroad
- combatting drugs
- humanitarian assistance

It is evident from the JSCP that a wide variety of military and non-military capabilities are to be integrated into the regional CINCs' plans. The breadth of military operations envisioned in this document has huge implications for the number, structure, training and operational tempo (OPTEMPO) of conventional units, to include general purpose ground forces.

HINTS OF THE CLINTON AGENDA

Having presented the Bush-Cheney-Powell strategy within the context of the current foreign policy and domestic debates, it is fair to ask whether Bill Clinton will steer the nation on a different international course. While the Clinton national security agenda and policies have yet to be formally enunciated,

some reasonable conclusions can be drawn from the transition team efforts, cabinet and white house appointments, and public remarks made by various senior Clinton administration officials. The only major foreign policy statements personally delivered by the President have been a recent international economy and trade speech at American University and remarks made before and during his Vancouver summit meeting with Russian President Boris Yeltsin. The insights and clues offered by these various sources point to the following broad policy outlines:

- America will remain fully engaged in world affairs while simultaneously fixing its domestic investment and deficit problems.

- the United States will continue to honor its multilateral and bilateral defense treaties, but with fewer military assets forward deployed.

- the nation will more aggressively support and participate in collective security arrangements, particularly United Nations' sponsored action.

- the Middle East peace process will continue as an American -led effort.

- the United States will work to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

- the United States will retain a nuclear arsenal sufficient to deter the employment of nuclear weapons by a hostile regional hegemon.

- America supports increased global free trade and expects its trading partners to reciprocate.

- the United States will employ all elements of its national

power to encourage the evolution of pluralistic, democratic societies and nations.

While these policy elements are admittedly somewhat speculative, the backgrounds of President Clinton's key national security team members (National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, and CIA Director R. James Woolsey) support this broad outline. Likewise, the President's affirmation of Bush policies toward Iraq, Somalia, Haitian refugees, and the Arab-Israeli negotiations points towards continued international activism. Mr. Clinton's employment of the Coast Guard screen around Haiti, airdrops of relief supplies in Bosnia, and willingness to proceed with Exercise TEAM SPIRIT in South Korea also signal his recognition that the military element of national power is a legitimate policy tool.

Both the nation and the international community need a more complete articulation of the President's national security strategy. Clearly, Mr. Clinton is keeping his campaign promise to make a reinvigorated domestic economy the cornerstone of his presidency. However, he does not have the luxury of deferring foreign policy decisions. A wide assortment of unpleasant overseas situations continue to unfold, and the Pentagon enters the annual budget fray unsure of the Clinton strategy. New defense dollars and manpower ceilings appear daily in the Washington rumor mill and national media, but no one is certain what these resources are intended to buy. We are attempting to construct a set of military capabilities that are wedded to ever-changing budget estimates in the absence of concrete national security guidance. For lack of

a better alternative, military planners appear to be building a force that is predicated on the Bush-Cheney-Powell strategy but funded by the ever-shrinking Clinton-Aspin dollars.

BASELINE CAPABILITIES

If we accept the premise that the initial vague outlines of Bill Clinton's national security strategy don't dramatically differ from George Bush's concept, we can move on to an examination of the strategy-capability matchup. The first step is to adopt the "base force" General Powell envisions for 1997 as the baseline capability against which all other proposals can be compared. For the remainder of this analysis, I have deliberately set aside any discussion of the adequacy of current or programmed strategic lift (air and sea). I will also focus strictly on general purpose forces (marine and army). Navy surface combatants, air force wings, and special operations forces (to include the ranger regiment) are held outside the scope of this analysis.

Earlier, the Bush-Cheney strategy documents were boiled down to four key elements: strategic deterrence and defense, forward presence, crisis response, and reconstitution. If we examine how the 1997 base ground force is utilized within these four elements, we can gain a sense of how well the defense strategy is achieved by General Powell's force structure. Setting aside nuclear deterrence as an inappropriate mission for conventional forces, army divisions and marine regiments are really fitted to the remaining three elements. Total available 1997 ground forces

(active and reserve) are listed in Table 1. Reserve component forces fall into two general categories: selected reserves (manned at or near full strength) and cadre units (25% manning). Army divisions have been categorized as light, airborne, air assault, or heavy to ensure differing capabilities are highlighted. Marine regiments are presumed to be equivalent to one another, although in reality, a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) can be easily tailored for a specific task.

TABLE 1
1997 BASE FORCE GROUND FORCES ARRAYED ACCORDING TO CURRENT REGIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

| ELEMENT OF STRATEGY | ACTIVE ARMY DIVISIONS | | | | RESERVE ARMY DIVISIONS | | | MARINE REGIMENTS | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|-------|------------------|---------|
| | AIRBORNE | AIR ASLT | LIGHT | HEAVY | LIGHT | HEAVY | CADRE | ACTIVE | RESERVE |
| FORWARD PRESENCE | | | 2 Note a | 2 Note b | | | | 3 Note c | |
| CRISIS RESPONSE | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | | | | 6 | |
| RECONSTITUTION | | | | | 1 | 5 Note d | 2 | | 3 |
| TOTALS | 1 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 3 |

Note a The division currently stationed in Korea is light-heavy mix but is counted as light in this analysis. The other light division is stationed in Hawaii.

Note b Both heavy divisions are assumed to remain in Europe.

Note c Forward presence of 3 marine regiments is assumed to be forces afloat or stationed in Okinawa and Hawaii.

Note d Army reserve divisions are assumed to require 1 year from mobilization to arrive in theater fully trained for combat.

A convenient way to compare the effectiveness of a variety of force structures is to establish a scenario that envisions a major regional contingency of DESERT SHIELD/STORM complexity, a lesser regional contingency of JUST CAUSE size, and a humanitarian/peace-keeping effort on the scale of RESTORE HOPE. A key assumption of this scenario is that the three deployments are sequenced closely enough that committed forces could not be readily deployed from one theater of operations to another. If we apply the 1997 planned ground forces to this scenario (Table 2), we commit to the DESERT STORM equivalent one army air assault division, five heavy army divisions, and five marine regiments. To the JUST CAUSE type of contingency we match one army airborne division and one army light division. We finally deploy for the peace-keeping mission three marine regiments and one army light division. If we assume that both army heavy divisions in Germany are deployed to the major Middle East/Soutwest Asia theater and that the army light division forward deployed in Korea remains in place, we face the startling reality that the readily available strategic ground reserve would consist of only two army heavy divisions in the continental United States (CONUS) and one marine regiment. One quickly concludes that General Powell's base force is not an over-stuffed relic of the Cold War. The base force allows us to meet regional contingencies and still retain some combat power to serve as a reasonable conventional deterrent. One notable shortcoming of the base force in this scenario is the total lack of ground forces in Europe after their deployment to a Middle East crisis.

TABLE 2
1997 BASE FORCE GROUND FORCES EMPLOYED IN THREE CONTINGENCY SCENARIO

| ELEMENT OF STRATEGY | ACTIVE ARMY DIVISIONS | | | | RESERVE ARMY DIVISIONS | | | MARINE REGTS | |
|---|-----------------------|----------|-------|-------------|------------------------|-------|-------|--------------|---------|
| | AIRBORNE | AIR ASLT | LIGHT | HEAVY | LIGHT | HEAVY | CADRE | ACTIVE | RESERVE |
| FORWARD PRESENCE | 1 Note a | | | | | | | | |
| CRISIS RESPONSE • MAJOR REGIONAL CONTINGENCY | | 1 | | 5 Note b | | | | 5 | |
| • LESSER REGIONAL CONTINGENCY | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | |
| • PEACEKEEPING CONTINGENCY | | | 1 | | | | | 3 | |
| • STRATEGIC RESERVE | | | | 2 Note c | | | | 1 | |
| RECONSTITUTION | | | | | 1 | 5 | 2 | | 3 |
| TOTALS | 1 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 3 |

Note a Light division forward deployed in Korea is not committed to contingencies outside NE Asia.

Note b Middle East/SW Asia contingency is supported by both heavy divisions forward deployed in Europe.

Note c Two remaining heavy divisions in CONUS serve as strategic reserve.

BELOW BASELINE PROPOSALS

Two other proposed ground force structures can be similarly matched to the three contingency scenario. The most widely recognized alternative to General Powell's base force is Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's "Option C". This proposal was offered by the then House Armed Services Committee Chairman to better relate force structure and costs to specified threats. A variety of threats throughout the world were expressed as pre-DESERT STORM Iraqi equivalents. Mr. Aspin then applied a building block force-

cost approach that stacked U.S. conventional forces against four contingencies equated to DESERT STORM, JUST CAUSE, PROVIDE COMFORT (support to Kurds In N. Iraq), and a Korean peninsula crisis requiring only American airpower.⁸

In order to convert "Option C" to the army division/marine regiment format of this analysis, I've made three assumptions about "Option C".

(1) The Clinton administration's expressed desire to reduce total active duty strength 200,000 below the 1.6 million floor of General Powell's base force would result in deactivation of 2 army divisions (1 light, 1 heavy) and 1 marine regiment.

(2) The desire to reduce permanent overseas forward stationing would prompt the heavy division deactivation to occur in Europe and the light division reduction to come from Korea.

(3) The deactivated marine regiment would be drawn down from III MEF in the Pacific.

The resulting ground force structure is detailed below in Table 3.

TABLE 3
ASPIN "OPTION C" GROUND FORCES ARRAYED ACCORDING TO CURRENT REGIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

| ELEMENT OF STRATEGY | ACTIVE ARMY DIVISIONS | | | | RESERVE ARMY DIVISIONS | | | MARINE REGIM | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|-------|-------|--------------|------|
| | AIRBORNE | AIR ASLT | LIGHT | HEAVY | LIGHT | HEAVY | CADRE | ACTIVE | RESE |
| FORWARD PRESENCE | | | 1 Note a | 1 Note b | | | | 2 Note c | |
| CRISIS RESPONSE | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | | | | 6 | |
| RECONSTITUTION | | | | | 1 | 5 | 2 | | 3 |
| TOTALS | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 3 |

Note a Division currently forward deployed in Korea would be deactivated, leaving one forward deployed light division in Hawaii.

Note b Only one heavy division would remain forward deployed in Europe.

Note c One regiment would remain in Okinawa, one in Hawaii, and MEU's afloat would rotate among both CONUS and forward-based regiments.

Applying the ground forces of the modified "option C" to the same three contingency scenario already described, (Table 4) some significant flexibility constraints appear:

- no U.S. ground forces remain in Europe(also a problem with base force)
- the strategic reserve shrinks to one army heavy division
- a mobilization of one marine reserve regiment would be nearly mandatory to maintain a reasonable forced entry capability.

TABLE 4
ASPIN "OPTION C" GROUND FORCES EMPLOYED IN THREE CONTINGENCY SCENARIO

| ELEMENT OF STRATEGY | ACTIVE ARMY DIVISIONS | | | | RESERVE ARMY DIVISION | | | MARINE REGIMENTS | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------|-------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|------------------|-------------|
| | AIRBORNE | AIR ASLT | LIGHT | HEAVY | LIGHT | HEAVY | CADRE | ACTIVE | RESERVE |
| FORWARD PRESENCE | | | | | | | | | |
| CRISIS RESPONSE | | | | | | | | | |
| •MAJOR REGIONAL CONTINGENCY | | 1 | | 5 Note a | | | | 5 | |
| •LESSER REGIONAL CONTINGENCY | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | |
| •PEACEKEEPING CONTINGENCY | | | 1 | | | | | 3 | |
| •STRATEGIC RESERVE | | | | 1 Note b | | | | | 1 Note c |
| RECONSTITUTION | | | | | 1 | 5 | 2 | | 2 |
| TOTALS | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 3 |

Note a The one heavy division stationed in Europe is committed to Middle East contingency.

Note b The only army strategic reserve is one CONUS-based heavy division.

Note c One reserve marine regiment is mobilized to ensure the strategic reserve retains a forced entry capability.

A second alternative to the base force is really a composite sketch that reflects a wide variety of proposals by those who seek a CONUS-based force with minimal active duty units and a large reserve.⁹ While such proposals vary considerably in detailed force configuration, they share the following common viewpoints:

- permanently-deployed overseas ground forces are wasteful and discourage European and Asian allies and friends from pursuing their own defense interests

- non-traditional missions for U.S. forces such as humanitarian relief and peacekeeping do not serve U.S. vital interests

- modest light and heavy contingency forces should be maintained in CONUS to respond to regional threats and unforeseen emergencies as part of an international coalition

- sizeable reserves should be maintained to augment active contingency forces in case a large sustained regional commitment arises.

This constrained force structure is summarized in Table 5. No active ground forces are forward-stationed in Europe, Korea, or Okinawa. One marine regiment is kept afloat and one army light division remains in Hawaii. CONUS active duty forces include a 2 division light corps, a 3 division heavy corps, and 6 marine regiments aligned with I and II MEF on the east and west coasts. Compared to both the base force and Secretary Aspin's "Option C", this alternative is extremely thin. It would contain only half (6 of 12) of the active army divisions envisioned by General Powell. Active marine regiments would shrink by one-third.

When this force is employed in the three contingency scenario,

it quickly becomes evident that large reserve combat elements must rapidly mobilize and deploy to the Middle East and to the peacekeeping operation. Equally significant, any strategic backup would have to be summoned from the reserves to provide the national command authority any flexibility or depth. Achieving the reserve readiness demanded by this third force structure option places expectations on our citizen-soldiers far beyond any historical precedent. Those who believe this option to be feasible have not yet offered a reserve training concept that overcomes the serious risks entailed by this proposal.

TABLE 5
MINIMUM CONTINGENCY FORCE WITH LARGE RESERVE COMPONENT

| ELEMENT OF STRATEGY | ACTIVE ARMY DIVISIONS | | | | RESERVE ARMY DIVISIONS | | | MARINE REGIMENTS | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------|-------------|------------------------|-------|-------|------------------|---------|
| | AIRBORNE | AIR ASLT | LIGHT | HEAVY | LIGHT | HEAVY | CADRE | ACTIVE | RESERVE |
| FORWARD PRESENCE | 1 Note a | | | | | | | 1 Note b | |
| CRISIS RESPONSE | 1 | 1 | | 3 Note c | | | | 6 | |
| RECONSTITUTION | | | | | 1 | 7 | 2 | | 5 |
| TOTALS | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 5 |

Note a Only active light division remains forward deployed in Hawaii.

Note b One regiment equivalent remains afloat as 3 MEUs.

Note c One heavy corps of 3 divisions stationed in CONUS to support primarily Middle East/SW Asia contingencies.

TABLE 6
MINIMUM CONTINGENCY FORCE WITH LARGE RESERVE COMPONENT EMPLOYED IN THREE
CONTINGENCY SCENARIO

| ELEMENT OF STRATEGY | ACTIVE ARMY DIVISIONS | | | | RESERVE ARMY DIVISIONS | | | MARINE REGIMENT | |
|---|-----------------------|----------|-------------|-------|------------------------|-------|-------|-----------------|---------|
| | AIRBORNE | AIR ASLT | LIGHT | HEAVY | LIGHT | HEAVY | CADRE | ACTIVE | RESERVE |
| FORWARD PRESENCE | | | | | | | | | |
| CRISIS RESPONSE • MAJOR REGIONAL CONTINGENCY | | 1 | | 3 | | 2 | | 5 | |
| • LESSER REGIONAL CONTINGENCY | 1 | | 1 Note a | | | | | | |
| • PEACEKEEPING CONTINGENCY | | | | | 1 | | | 2 | 1 |
| • STRATEGIC RESERVE | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| RECONSTITUTION | | | | | | 4 | 2 | | 3 |
| TOTALS | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 5 |

Note a Light division would be redeployed from Hawaii to lesser regional contingency.

The three ground force alternatives that have been stacked up against a post-1997 scenario within the nation's stated national security and military strategies offer significantly different capabilities and risks. General Powell offers a base force that is sizeable, flexible, and poses only modest risks. This force structure is admittedly more expensive than the other two alternatives, but better maintains the military instrument as a viable element of national power. Mr. Aspin seeks to accomplish the same thing at a lower cost. His option suffers two serious flaws: (1) threats are expressed in 1990 terms rather than 1997-2002 projections. We must build capabilities against potential enemies a decade in the future--not against yesterday's

threats. (2) commitment of active duty ground forces to any scenario similar to the one offered in this analysis leaves the national command authority a dangerously thin strategic reserve.

The third alternative serves an entirely different purpose. It provides a capability to respond to small regional contingencies and assumes long warning times for greater threats that require major selected reserve callup. Only the most optimistic view of the world a decade from now and a willingness to forego military power as a genuine component of foreign policy justify such a force structure. This final option endangers the nation's future and guarantees an inability to influence the outcome of several looming crises.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR OUR RESERVES

An enduring image in American politics is that of the "citizen-soldier". The revival of our reserve forces after Vietnam culminated in a major callup and commitment of citizen-soldiers to the Persian Gulf War. While reserve unit performance in Southwest Asia and throughout the United States substantially contributed to our victory, the callup also sparked a sharp controversy that has become a central issue in the ongoing debate about both military strategy and force structure. Many of the nation's political leaders have seized upon the reserve component of our defense establishment as a means of maintaining military capability without bearing the burden of expensive active duty forces. The touted benefits of sizeable reserves include:

- a relatively inexpensive capability that serves the needs of both individual state governors and the national security establishment

- a means to reduce the scope and lessen the economic and political pain of domestic base closures and realignments

- a hedge against growing uncertainty about future international stability

- a way to justify continued investment in both "hot" and "cold" defense industrial base initiatives

The Gulf War was the nation's first wartime attempt since World War II to exercise its "total force" policy. This successful effort, however, masks real flaws. Defenders of the reserve component contributions to DESERT SHIELD/STORM point with justifiable pride to their ability to quickly integrate into the war effort. Reserve combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) units joined the steady flow of assets to the Persian Gulf in relatively small packets; companies and detachments were the most common size. Likewise, small marine reserve combat units were called up and deployed.

The only large ground combat formations activated were three Army National Guard "roundout" brigades for three heavy active component (AC) divisions. These units went through rigorous training at the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California but did not deploy to the theater of operations. Senior army leaders, including then Chief of Staff Carl Vuono, assessed the roundout brigades not ready for combat when called to active duty. The units' gunnery skills and maneuver proficiency

above platoon level were not on a par with their active duty counterparts. Separate active duty brigades were substituted for three National Guard roundouts.

Among the many vocal critics of this decision was Major Craig Chapman, executive officer of a roundout battalion. He views the issue as a political problem within the Army, not a readiness failure. His prescription for the future:

"First, the Army should abandon its campaign to form an all-AC contingency force and admit that the RC should play a role in regional contingency missions. The RC CS/CSS units deployed to the Persian Gulf proved that dependence on reservists does not hamper U.S. responsiveness...Strategic lift, not Army force structure, determine the rate at which we can commit forces into distant theaters".¹⁰

Major Chapman's assertions are correct, but ignore the central problem. As a nation, we need to fix our strategic lift shortfall in order to more quickly deploy combat ready units requiring little additional training. It is convoluted logic to claim that later deploying reserves are adequate contingency forces because we will never fix our strategic lift deficiencies. Again, small CS/CSS reserve packages are ready on short notice; National Guard and Army Reserve combat maneuver brigades are not! It simply is not practical to execute on a large scale the intensive, resource-devouring process of bringing large reserve ground combat units to combat readiness for contingency operations envisioned by the JSCP and the scenario I've created for this analysis. The idea of deploying most CONUS-based active units to a series of farflung contingencies and simultaneously conducting NTC-style training for three or more National Guard divisions is simply not credible. Those who champion the cause for increased reliance on reserve

combat units should heed the warning of two training experts, Colonel Lory Johnson, Jr and Lieutenant Colonel Thomas R. Rozman who have extensively studied the training needs of reservists:

"A significant group of formations, with a downsized regular establishment providing trainers and training resources, especially after significant regular unit deployments, would be a major challenge. It would probably force the country to accept one of two options:

- Train to a lesser standard and accept greater risk on the battlefield (more casualties).

- ▼Take a longer time to train to standards, accepting the risks of longer conflict, with less flexibility in pursuing national strategies and an ill-prepared response to potential decimation of any deployed forces."¹¹

Absolutely no one criticizes the determination, commitment, or basic abilities of our reserve warriors; the problem is that the complexity of a modern battlefield cannot be mastered in 39 days of annual training scattered over twelve months. Reserve component forces are crucial to our national defense strategy-too crucial to risk their slaughter by premature commitment. We must capitalize on RC real capabilities rather than pretend they are super-human. The Marines have developed a means of effectively integrating their modest reserve forces that needs little change; the U.S. Army has a much more complicated problem of changing their reserve structure to better support contingency operations and sustained combat. What follows is a proposal to effect those needed changes.

A NEW RESERVE COMPONENT STRUCTURE

The fundamental fault with the current U.S. Army reserve component structure lies in over-taxing the National Guard. Asking

these men and women to prepare for rapid mobilization and commitment to a modern battlefield with 39 days of annual training and perform a wide variety of valuable state roles in disaster relief, civil disturbance, forest fire control, and counternarcotics operations defies common sense. The OPTEMPO of National Guard domestic missions in 1992 was astounding. What I propose is a redesign of the National Guard into an organization that can truly meet domestic commitments and would perform specialized combat missions only under unusual circumstances.

Restructuring would entail the following:

- (1) Remove all heavy divisions and separate heavy brigades from the National Guard.

- (2) Create within each state one or more composite brigades consisting of six types of battalions and companies: military police, light infantry, heavy equipment engineers, medical (ambulance and field hospital), heavy and medium truck transport, and aviation (utility and medium lift). The primary focus of the military police would be civil unrest and counternarcotics. Light infantry would concentrate on urban combat and civil unrest. The remaining elements would focus on their specialties within the context of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.

- (3) Pass legislation allowing the President to selectively call up these composite brigades for 180 days overseas peacekeeping or humanitarian relief missions under U.S. or United Nations' control. This restructuring would allow National Guard soldiers to focus on fewer training requirements that better contribute to their critical domestic role. Any overseas service

would be primarily non-combat.

The Army Reserve would retain its current combat support and service support missions in conjunction with active component divisions, corps, and theater armies. Additionally, the Army Reserve would form two heavy corps of three divisions each; equipped with the tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and artillery gained from disestablished National Guard units. One corps would be fully manned and would be the first source of combat power to reinforce large, sustained contingencies or reconstitute the strategic reserve when all active CONUS divisions are committed. The second corps would be fully equipped but manned at 10-20% cadre strength. It would assist in the annual training of the fully manned corps and serve as a reconstitution base, able to attain full combat readiness 18-24 months after mobilization. In both corps, the training goal in peacetime must be to attain and maintain individual, squad, and platoon combat skills. Battalion through corps commanders and staff would undergo annual battle staff exercises.

Reserve component restructuring of this complexity would require a decade to accomplish. While ambitious, this proposal more realistically employs our citizen-soldiers within the peacetime constraints of part-time training.

CONCLUSION

This nation possesses a vast reservoir of power that should be used constructively to further our national interests. Our

current preoccupation with the domestic economic aspect of that strength has caused the national policy debate to become one-dimensional. The international authority and respect this country has amassed over the last 50 years can be squandered in the next five years if we forget how we attained our current stature. A highly effective blend of diplomatic, economic, and military activity has allowed us to survive and prosper.

Despite a growing uneasiness over prospects for global peace and stability, we appear ready to dismantle the military instrument of national power. The base force proposed by the Bush administration may be gutted in our headlong rush to reduce the federal budget deficit. In particular, general purpose ground forces appear to be in a state of free-fall. General purpose has become a term that some seem to define as "no purpose" while others characterize it as "all purpose". As we watch the Clinton administration national security policy evolve, we cannot fall prey to the illusory image of a "peace dividend". As this essay has outlined, the base force provides barely sufficient strength to deal with likely threats. Mr. Aspin's proposal for an even smaller force leaves even less margin for error. If we genuinely expect to retain the ability to influence the outcome of world events we cannot abandon the central thesis of ground combat power; deter and when necessary fight successfully to achieve national objectives. Quite frankly, wholesale reductions of army and marine strength and unrealistic reliance on reserve forces will endanger both halves of that thesis.

Mr. Aspin and many others who propose active duty conventional ground forces smaller than 12 army divisions and 9 marine regiments never address the issue of how much combat power is necessary for credible deterrence. Much is said about future risks, threats, and uncertainty, but ground force options never quite achieve the "critical mass" necessary to prevent a host of potential "bad actors" from perceiving America as incapable of defending her interests. Those who describe General Powell's base force as wasteful or extravagant apparently don't recognize the need to maintain readily deployable ground combat units as a hedge against disaster. Not content with a one-third reduction in strength by 1997, these pundits unwittingly encourage our potential adversaries to perform a dangerous calculus of power. Sharp reductions below the base force at the same time we appear increasingly ready to take on ever larger U.N. sanctioned humanitarian and peacekeeping missions pose unacceptable risks.

To prevent downsizing that will further stretch the already excessive OPTEMPO of our existing army and marine forces, I have proposed the following:

(1) Maintain active duty forces at the 1997 base force level of 12 army divisions (1 airborne, 1 air assault, 3 light, and 7 heavy) and 9 marine regiments.

(2) Maintain forward stationed forces as follows:

- 2 heavy army divisions in Europe
- 1 light army division in NE Asia
- 1 light army division in Hawaii
- 1 marine expeditionary force (3 regiments) in Okinawa

with at least 2 MEUs afloat.

(3) Convert all National Guard units to composite brigades designed to perform traditional domestic missions and those overseas humanitarian and peacekeeping assignments that carry little risk of combat.

(4) Restructure the Army Reserve to contain two heavy corps (one fully manned, one at 10-20% cadre strength).

Some will point at the cost of this force structure and loudly proclaim the nation's inability to afford the expense. Given the failure of the NEW WORLD ORDER to appear as advertised, I suggest the United States cannot afford to prematurely declare victory and bury its head in the sand as we have done so many times in the last 217 years.

Notes

- 1 Colin L. Powell, "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," Foreign Affairs Winter 1992/93:33.
- 2 The White House, National Security Strategy (Washington D.C.:U.S. Government Printing Office, Jan 1993)3.
- 3 Office of the Secretary of Defense, Regional Defense Strategy (Washington D.C.:U.S. Government Printing Office, Jan 1993)3.
- 4 Office of the SecDef, Regional 14-15.
- 5 Office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 1, Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 11 Nov 91)54-59.
- 6 Strategy Division, J-5, Joint Staff, "JSCP Briefing-Flexible Deterrent Option" Feb 93:3.
- 7 Strategy Division, J-5, "JSCP Briefing Slides-Forward Presence Operations" Feb 93:3.
- 8 Les Aspin, "The New Security" (Washington D.C., House Armed Services Committee, Feb 92)10.
- 9 Ted Galen Carpenter, Angelo Codevilla, Aaron Friedberg, William R. Hawkins, Murray Weidenbaum, and Don S. Zakheim, "Fighting Trim; How to Cut the Defense Budget by \$100 Billion," Policy Review (Heritage Foundation, 1992 Spring)50-70.
- 10 Craig S. Chapman, "Gulf War: Nondeployed Roundouts," Military Review Sep 1992:32.
- 11 Lory M. Johnson Jr. and Thomas R. Rozman, "Training Reserve Component Units to Standard," Military Review Sep 1992:41.